

Annual intake report 2018



**Cara House: A place of healing, growth and
discovery.**

Cara House,



***Providing exemplary support for
children, young people and their
families for 20 years.***

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1. Acknowledgements

Cara House wishes to acknowledge the Wangal people, the traditional landowners on which Cara House stands and provides service to the vulnerable community. We hold the knowledge that through forced assimilation, colonisation and the ongoing intergenerational trauma that the field of child protection and justice have contact with high numbers of Aboriginal people. It is our hope that we as a practice, support the connection and love of heritage so that culture and identity is embedded into practice as an important resilience factor.

To all of the brave children, young people and adult survivors, you continue to teach us about the meaning of joy and hope. We thank you for the trust you place in us, while we cross paths to your full potential on your journey of growth and healing. We wish to provide a safe and fun place for you where the full extent of your wisdom can be voiced, heard and acted upon. You are much more than the sum of your abuse- you all have a divine spark within. Thank you for your courage.

Thank you to the workers, families, carers and organisations who provide love, care and support for vulnerable and at- risk children. It is through your dedication and commitment to persevere in the presence of another's pain that these children can flourish. We know that pain is felt by all when abuse and trauma has been experienced and that through love, nurture, kindness and a lot of hard work that you assist children and young people to overcome the darkness of abuse and reconnect with hope and happiness.

To the Cara House team, consultants and Manager, Manny, you each provide a wealth of knowledge alongside an unshakable stance that hope exists and recovery is possible. Cara House is able to support so many vulnerable persons through your devotion to this work, children, young people and families. Your amazing work touches and transforms those around you.

And finally, to Mary Jo- thank you. You provide unwavering support for your workers and for the wider community. Your expert knowledge and guidance highlight best practice, so that human rights can prevail in the face of great difficulty. You truly are a shining light for many through the darkness of abuse.

2. Cara House personnel

Management Team	
Mary Jo Mc Veigh	CEO and Founder
Conor Mc Veigh	Executive Assistant
Manny Kassiotis	Manager
Arlys Olson	Finance Manager
Alys McLennan	Operations Manager
Counselling Team	
Manny Kassiotis	Trainer, Counsellor, Groupwork Facilitator, Supervisor
Alys McLennan	Trainer, Counsellor, Groupwork Facilitator, Wrapped in Angels Supervisor
Margaret Cartmell	Trainer, Senior Counsellor, Groupwork Facilitator, Supervisor
Ashley Gobeil	Trainer, Counsellor, Groupwork Counsellor,
Consultancy and Group Program Team	
Karen Verrier	Senior Clinician, Supervisor, Groupwork Counsellor
Amanda Boyd	Senior Clinician, Supervisor, Groupwork Counsellor
Liz Morrison	Supervisor, Groupwork Counsellor
Ashton Hayes	Counsellor, Assessment officer
Thomas Dornan	Counsellor, Supervisor
Maria Lorsordo	Groupwork Counsellor
Jenny Pitty	Groupwork Counsellor
Jo Davies	Groupwork Counsellor
Sarah Dillane	Groupwork Counsellor
Conor Mc Veigh	Youth Worker

3. Message from the Intake Officer

This is a big year in the life of Cara House! The year 2018 was the 20th anniversary in which Cara House has been in service to children young people and their families. Mary Jo was also honoured as a finalist in the Australian of the Year, 2019 Local Hero category for her lifelong dedication to working with vulnerable communities. Additionally, Cara House found a new home, right next to our old cottage at number 1 Davidson Avenue. This was a big move, a short distance. Our clients and staff found our new premise to be instantly as comforting, if not more so than when we were at 148 Majors Bay. We have also met new milestones by becoming accredited by NDIS and also engaging a new organisation structure. CEO, Mary Jo and Manager, Manny Kassiotis support a central team of counsellors and the consultants to provide a range of services to agencies and families.



As the only fulltime employee, I am in a position to notice the everyday happenings at Cara on a daily basis (it helps that I also sit at the heart of Cara in the office space provided). From here the business of the day happens around me and so I get to notice the staff, the visitors and all of the rich patterns that we bring to Cara. *What do I notice?*

I notice that there is a genuineness in all of the relationships; relationships to each other, to the work and to the service. I notice that trauma and abuse does not mar interactions and that instead hope, gratitude and joy often dissipate the heaviness that past oppressions may have caused. I notice moments of acceptance, respect and growth. I notice the unseen of when someone is shown a small kindness by being offered a cup of tea or when obvious celebrations of birthdays or achievements are highlighted.

I noticed that our Cara community stood together despite Cara House undergoing some significant changes this year. While change can often be unsettling or difficult, I found that people met these changes with heart, trust and a sense of community.

I see the everyday acts of kindness, compassion and respect that the Cara workers show to those who attend the House so they may feel safety, belonging and calm. The team of highly skilled professionals put every effort into supporting Cara clients on their unique pathway to healing, growth and discovery from the moment they enter and exit our building.

To me, these observations speak of the stable, strong and compassionate support as well as the vision and purpose that Cara House brings to the lives of the workers, visitors and clients. I feel that these support factors assist workers to hold space for people who come to Cara with stories of pain, oppression and deep despair.

I wish to leave everyone with a big thank you to the parents, carers, guardians and support workers who commit to long drives and waits in the car. Without your assistance the journey would be far more difficult. Let us all acknowledge the strength, wisdom and generosity of the children, young people and their families. This is something that I am so lucky to witness. I hold your stories of abuse, but I can see there is so much more to each of you- that divine spark in each of you lives on!

-Alys McLennan

4. Executive Summary

Cara House is one of Sydney's leading trauma services. Cara House has been established since 1998 and was founded by Mary Jo Mc Veigh. This is the 20th year that Cara House has been in service to vulnerable people. During that time, Cara House has grown from a sole practice, to an organisation with the following breakdown of staff:

- 2 FTE staff (CEO and Operations Manager)
- 3 PTE staff (Counselling Team)
- 1 Casual staff (Executive Assistant)
- 10 Contractors (Consultants, Finance Manager and groupwork facilitators)

Our highly skilled practitioners are all trauma trained and use a combination of creative and traditional therapies to support clients on their path to healing. It is through these elements that healing, growth and discovery can take place. We provide a wide range of individually tailored services to meet specific goals or needs including:

- counselling
- carer/ parent coaching
- assessment
- groupwork
- training
- supervision/ consultation
- and management coaching

Human Rights-

Cara House is known for their excellence in trauma- specific counselling with a focus on child protection and human rights. Cara House upholds advocacy for human rights and best practice within every forum of practice. Guided by CEO, Mary Jo's PHD studies, this year, Cara House has been developing their participatory practices further and will continue to expand their Human Rights practices further. In 2019, Cara House will be hosting their first biannual Human rights Symposium.

Secondary Victims Pilot-

Cara House's flagship program, "Wrapped in Angels", established in the early 2000s, has been recommended as a best practice program for work with traumatised people by Victim's Services. Recently, the Commissioner of NSW Victims Services has expanded approved for Cara House to complete a pilot program for Secondary Victims commencing in 2019. Cara House will be supporting JIRT clients throughout this project.

Community Development-

Cara House is built on a solid reputation for their leading work in the field of trauma and abuse. In 2017 it was identified that the majority of referrals were made from agency workers who had viewed our website or become aware of Cara via word of mouth. Therefore, a new marketing plan was created whereby the Intake worker would be available to discuss Cara services, including Wrapped, at quarterly In-service meetings for NGO's in our industry. Further to this, students from FaCS, Rosie's Place and Benevolent Society were granted site visits to see Cara and speak to us about our practices, services and philosophies. The marketing plan also support Cara to implement a new Facebook Page, further Linkedln posts and a new Instagram account to gather a social media platform for advertising.

Premise and Organisational structure changes-

Not only did Cara House move to a new physical location (luckily still situated within the Canada Bay and Concord area), we also undertook a major change to our organisational structure by hiring a central counselling team and a clinical manager. Further to this, Cara House the organisation underwent a rigorous assessment to become an NDIS accredited service provider.

Trauma is experienced through the senses, body, mind and spirit we therefore, Cara House worked to ensure that the physical location move was supportive and informative to provide minimal disruption to our clients. Our team worked tirelessly over a weekend to ensure that the new Cara was ready to welcome clients by business open on the Monday. Each of the counselling spaces were set up to support relationship and recovery by incorporating all of the sensory, narrative and physiological healing elements in teach space. The new premise is also a cottage-styled building to promote a comfortable and homely atmosphere.

A central Cara counselling team have been hired on a part time basis. This ensures that the support of vulnerable clients and informative training for workers in the field is readily accessible and available. The team are supported by CEO, Mary Jo Mc Veigh and Manager, Manny Kassiotis so they may continue to provide excellence in service. A team of highly skilled consultants are also in place so that a larger number of vulnerable persons can engage in services.

Statistics-

Cara House' client base, capacity and demand, continued to be monitored via statistical analysis. Statistics collected are in the following forms:

- Monthly overview of initial intake inquiries
- Quarterly practitioner client load
- Quarterly supervisor consultancy load

Statistical analysis demonstrated that Cara House received 251 referrals in year 2018. Of these referrals, Cara House gave clinical support to N=76 open cases in term 1, N= 68 during term 2 and in term 3 N= 73 open clinical cases. Term 4 clinical caseload statistics were not available at the time this report was written, although intake statistics were. In year 2018, Cara House provided support to an average of 72.33 clients per term. In addition to this, Cara House supported workers and agencies in the form of 61 consultees and 62 training courses facilitated across 2018.

5. Cara House Activities

As Cara House is considered to be one of Sydney's leading trauma services, it is imperative that we undertake processes and reviews. This ensures that we uphold accountability, ensure services are readily available for vulnerable communities and continue to grow and develop within this ever changing and dynamic field of child protection, trauma and human services.

The Cara House activities that this report will discuss are as follows:

1. Statistics from initial frontline inquiries through to provision of support services and closure.
2. Client and Consultancy Statistics.
3. Training Statistics.

6. Cara House Intake Statistics

Intake statistics have been collected since June 2016 when Cara House intake procedures were revised to include statistical analysis.

In 2018 a total number of 251 new referrals were processed. In comparison to the referrals processed in 2017 (N=200) the data demonstrates that Cara House has received a greater number of referrals this year. Referrals were categorised as children/ young people, adults, families, siblings, workers and teams. For the purpose of this report units of families, siblings and teams were counted as one intake referral. When reviewing the 2018 monthly data statistics, February was the peak referral period (N=33) followed by November (N=27) which was a similar trend to 2017. This below graph demonstrates that the monthly referral numbers for the past three years (please note that data collection commenced in June 2016).

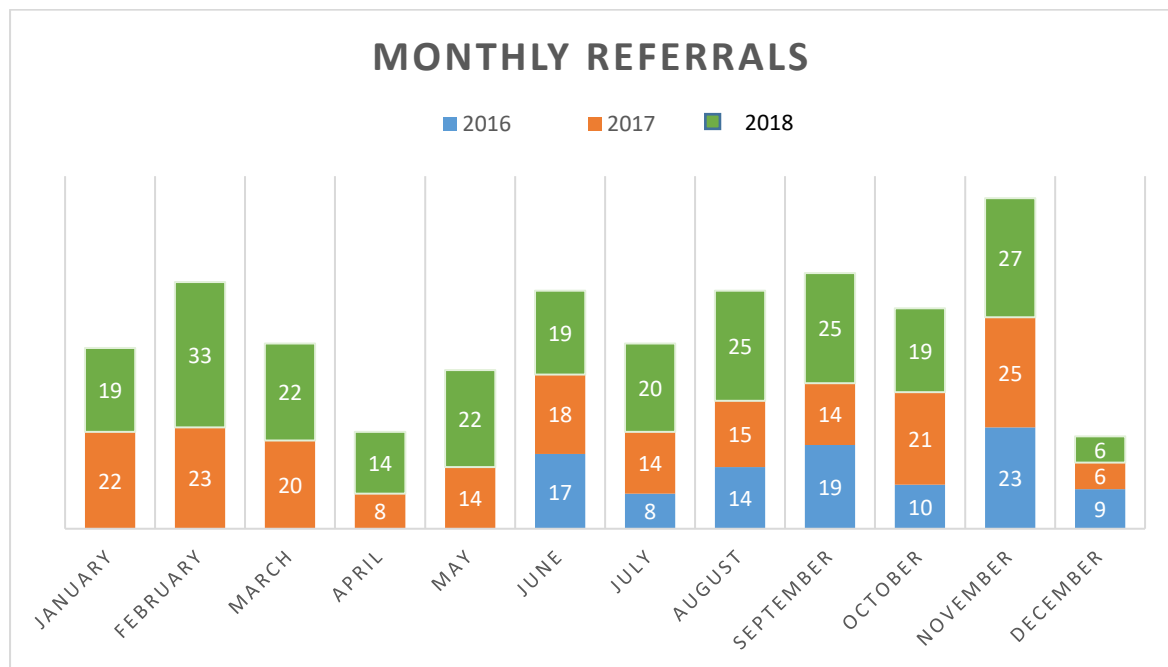


Figure 1:1 Overview of the intake monthly referrals.

Referral Types-

As was the same for past years, significantly more children and young people (individuals below the age of 18 years) were referred to Cara House in 2018 than for any other referral type N= 117). A noticeable shift in data was that worker categories decreased. Team referrals dropped from (N=11) during 2017 to (N= 8) across 2018. Similarly, individual worker consultation referrals dropped from (N= 24) in 2017 to (N= 20) in 2018. For all other categories, a positive trend was noted in data numbers.

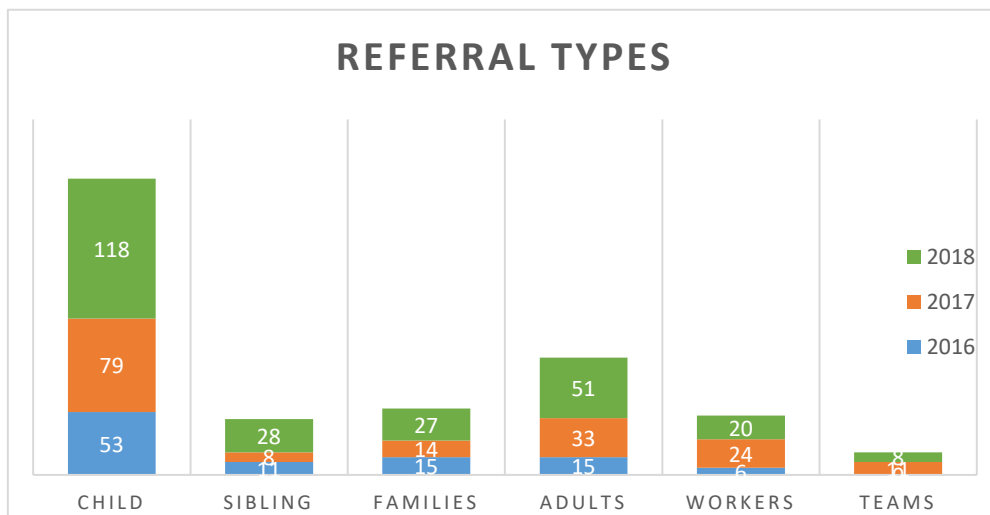


Figure 1:2 Overview of the 2016- 2018 intake referral types.

Gender Comparisons-

The chart below demonstrates that intake referrals received by Cara House are most frequently for female clients. Please note the discrepancy between the overall referrals and number of gender individuals is due to the family, sibling or carers being grouped as a unit and gender is considered per individual. No persons who identified as transgender was referred to Cara House in 2018.

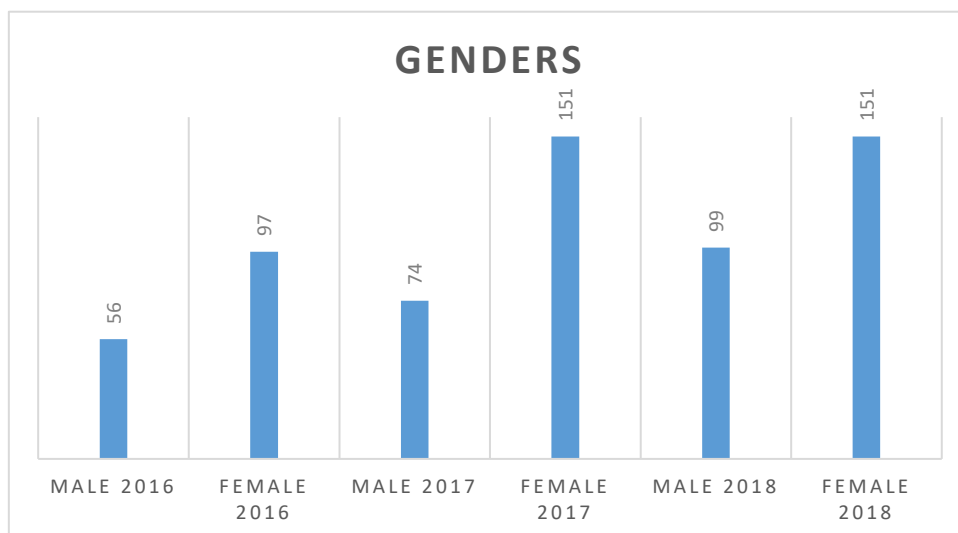


Figure 1:3 Overview of the genders of the referrals made to Cara House.

Ethnicity-

Cara House welcomes and provides service to vulnerable people of all culture and backgrounds. The below chart indicates that 4.42% of persons referred to Cara House in 2018 identified as Aboriginal, 12.85% 2018 were from CALD backgrounds, equating to 17.27% of clients referred to Cara House. Please note that these figures were from available data and may be underreported during initial intake engagement opportunities.

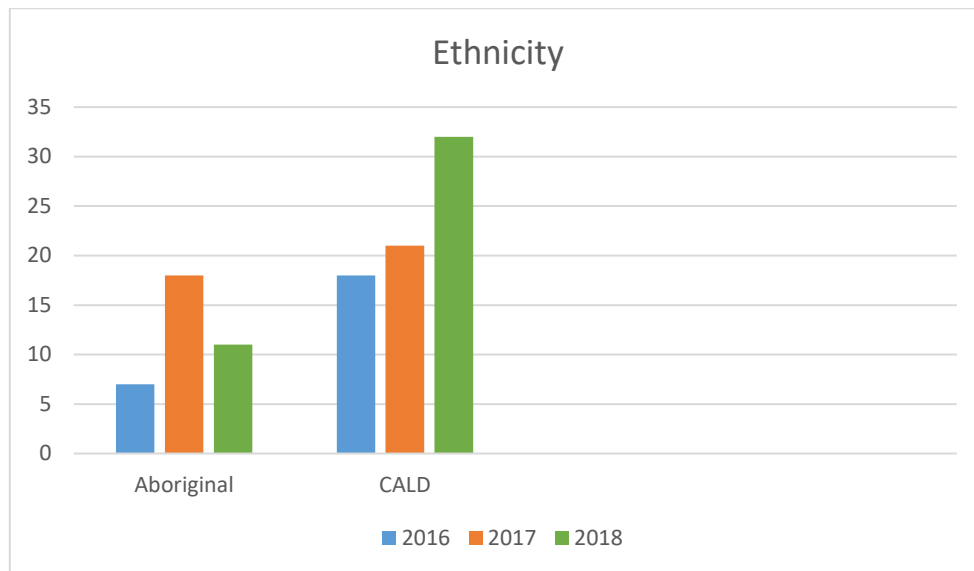


Figure 1:4 Overview of ethnicity of persons referred to Cara House

Residential Status-

Looking at the child referrals only (i.e. not including families or siblings), those individuals referred to Cara House and were living in out-of-home-care was 64.05% (75 of the 118 child referrals). If these stats were generalised to include number of engagements with the child protection system, this figure would rise significantly due to the number of restoration, preservation and JIRT investigated cases that were also referred.

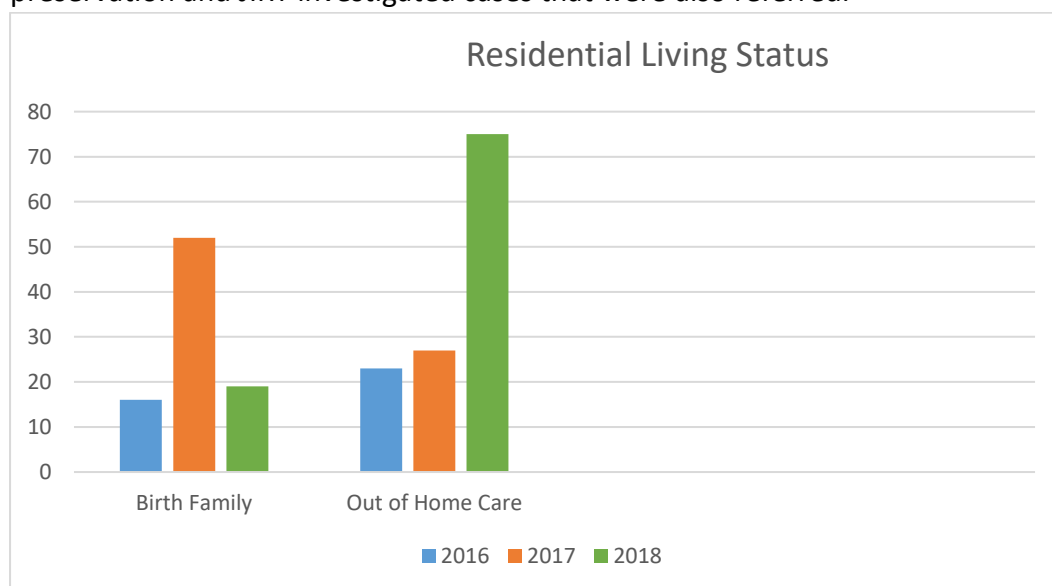


Figure 1:5 Overview of residential status of persons referred to Cara House

7. Clinical Statistics 2018

The Cara house team (N=5) and consultants (N= 4) provide statistical data feedback to the intake manager outlining their caseloads across each term. This feedback process commenced term 1, 2018 and carried across the year. Data was broken down into the following two categories:

- a) Client caseload
- b) Consultancy caseload

Data feedback was categorised into the following four categories:

- a) Children
- b) Adults
- c) Couples

Client Caseloads 2017; term overview-

Overall, caseload capacity appeared to remain consistent across the year with term 1 (N= 89), term 2 (N= 86) and term 3 (N=97).

- Term 1: The client statistics (Figure 2:1) demonstrates that Cara House held a total number of N= 89 clients on the clinician caseload. Data shows that the majority of clients attending Cara House counselling support were classified as individual children/ young people (N=46) with adults the next highest number (N=37) and then couples (N=6). During the term, three (3) cases were on hold and ten (10) cases were closed leaving the majority of cases as open (N= 76).
- Term 2: The client statistics (Figure 2:1) demonstrates that Cara House held a total number of N= 86 clients on the clinician caseload. Data shows that the majority of clients attending Cara House counselling support were classified as individual children/ young people (N= 45) with adults the next highest number (N= 36) and then couples (N= 5). During this term, four (4) cases were on hold and fourteen (14) cases were closed leaving the majority of cases as open (N= 68).
- Term 3: The client statistics (Figure 2:1) demonstrates that Cara House held a total number of N= 97 clients on the clinician caseload. Data shows that the majority of clients attending Cara House counselling support were classified as individual children/ young people (N= 61) with adults the next highest number (N=36) and then couples (N=3). Across the term, thirteen (13) cases were on hold and eleven (11) cases were closed leaving the majority of cases as open (N= 73).

In comparison to the 2017 statistics, this data demonstrates that even though Cara House had fewer practitioners that we were able to provide services to consistent numbers of clients each term as demonstrated below:

- 2018: term 1 (N= 89), term 2 (N= 86) and term 3 (N=97).
- 2017: term 1 (N= 89), term 2 (N= 93) and term 3 (N=86).

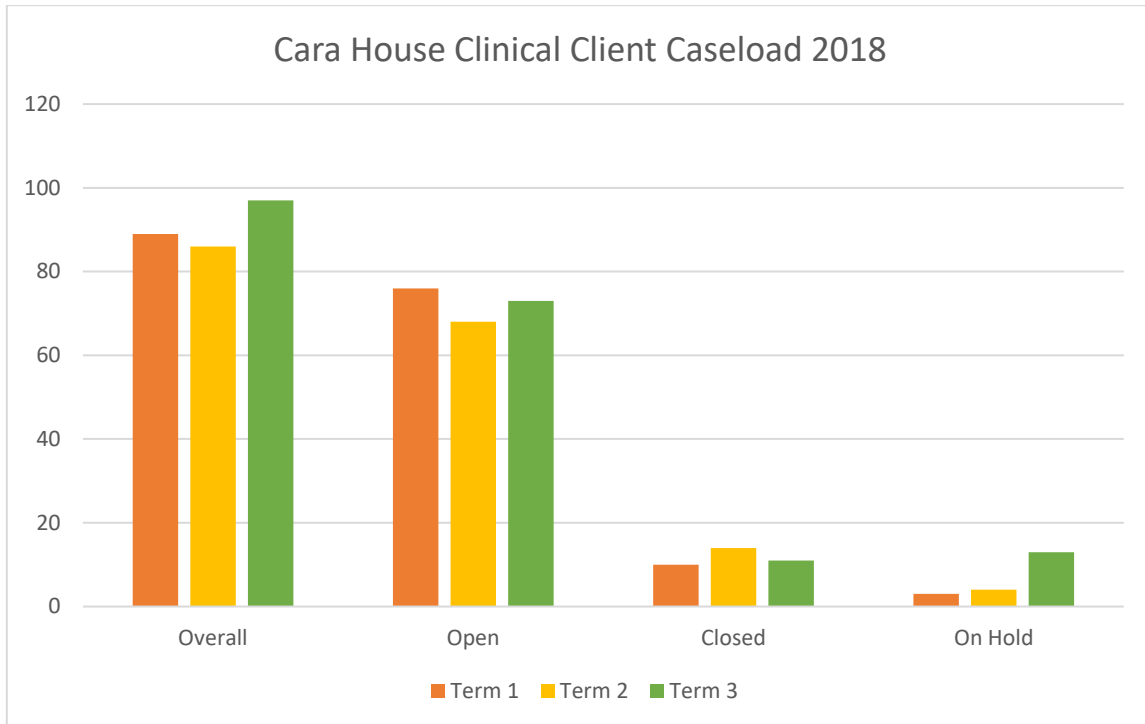


Figure 2:1 Cara House clinical client caseload

Client categorisation-

When reviewing these referrals per category, the leading client group across terms 1-3 2018 terms were children and young people (N= 152) equating for 55.27% of overall clients for this time period. This was followed by adults (N= 109), then couples (N= 14).

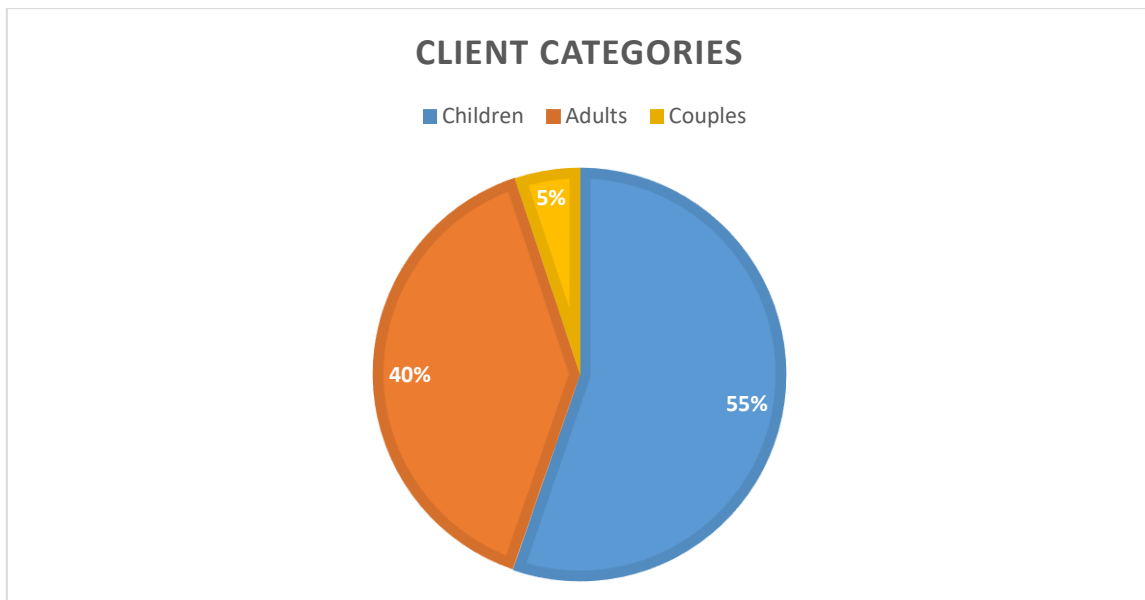


Figure 2:2 Cara House client categories

Caseload clients' referring agencies and abuse histories-

Cara House provides services to clients who have suffered all forms of abuse and trauma. Referrals are welcome from multiple entry points including agency or support workers, parents or carers as well as self-referrals. The majority of client referrals on caseloads at Cara House were indicated to be (Figure 2:3) from non-government organisations (N= 102), then Victims Services (N= 69), followed by Family and Community Services (N= 52), then self-referrals (N=37). Other referring parties included Health (N=7), early intervention reduced significantly from 2017 sitting at only (N=5) and finally JIRT and NDIS both (N=1) . Please note that often JIRT make recommendations for referrals and the NGO or FaCS worker follows through on the referral and the JIRT matter indicated was a special case. No women's refuge's referred individual clients this year.

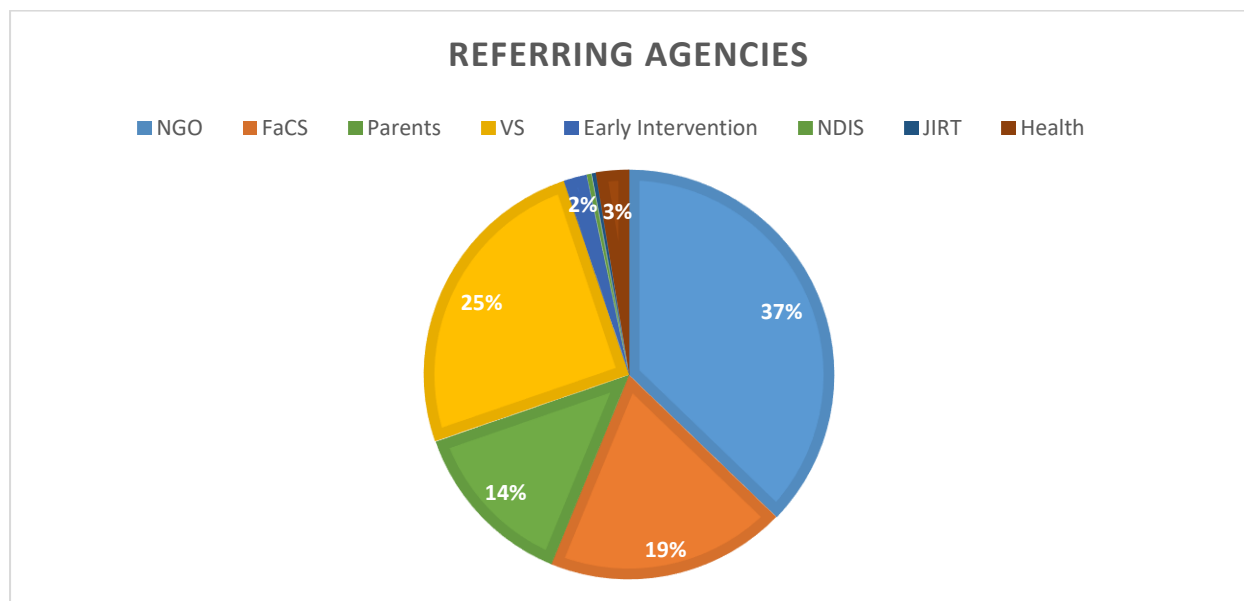


Figure 2:3 Caseload Referring Agencies

Abuse history has continued to be the most difficult data set to capture. The vast majority of clients being referred indicated co-morbid abuse categories, which were chronic in nature. Therefore, the below data falls short of capturing a true account of the overall abuse that children, young people and adults have suffered prior to presenting to Cara House. Further to this, as clients often attend Cara House for more than one term, their history of abuse may be accounted for more than once. Of the 251 identified abuse histories recorded across terms 1-3 2018 (not including those referred for parenting or carer coaching), primary referral reasons were made for domestic violence (N= 108), domestic violence and sexual assault (N= 47), sexual assault (N= 29), other (N= 15), Bereavement (N=11), witness to murder or suicide (N=10), Peer or sibling abuse (N=9), emotional abuse (N= 7), Physical abuse (N=6), Medical trauma (N=5) and neglect (N= 4).

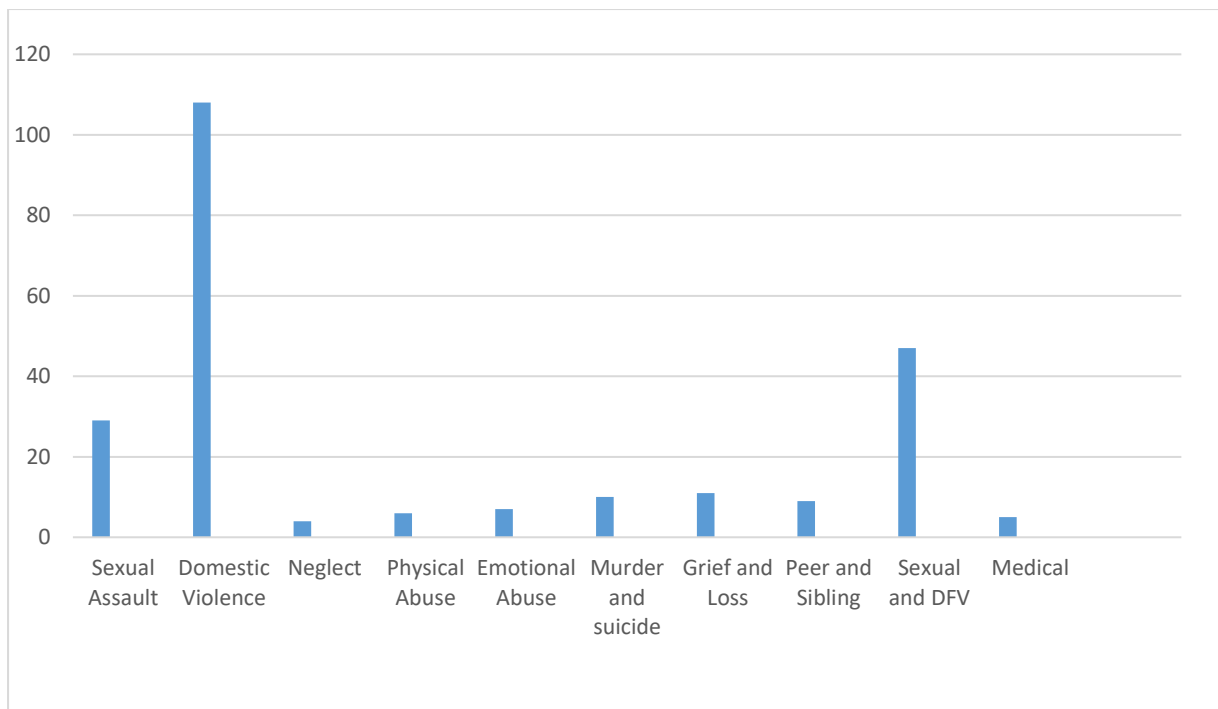


Figure 2:4 Caseload Trauma Histories

Cara House saw a new form of trauma history being associated with client referrals this year, being medical trauma. The number of death related traumas were increased in 2018 compared to 2017. No kidnapping or armed robberies were among the data recorded, again a difference from 2017.

8. Consultancy Statistics

At Cara House we are fortunate enough to provide services that we are well matched to, have expertise in or have a devout interest in pursuing. Mary Jo and seven of Cara House practitioners provide supervision and consultancy services. Their statistical data feedback was provided to the intake manager at the end of each school term, outlining their consultancy caseloads. This feedback process commenced term 1, 2018 and carried across the year.

In order to respect the confidentiality of the individuals and organisations, general information will be provided in this report only. When reviewing this information please note that Mary Jo Mc Veigh provides additional crisis/ emergency/ high profile consultancy sessions, which have not been included in this data. The majority of these additional sessions are provided to Family and Community Services.

Term 1 2018 saw that (N= 23) consultations were engaged, in term 2 2018 (N= 27) and term 3 being (N= 11), with overall numbers of consultees engaged being (N= 61) between term 1-3 2018. This is a significant reduction from the previous year which saw (N=105) in the same timeframe. This decrease could be associated with Mary Jo reducing her clinical consult hours.

- **Term 1:** The consultancy statistics (Figure 3:1) shows that the majority of people attending consultancy sessions were classified as individual workers (N=11) with teams and management consultancy tied on (N=6 per category). Please note that one of the management data points was for management-specific coaching for a team of 12. In comparison to the previous year consultancy has overall decreased in number but management coaching has increased.
- **Term 2:** The consultancy statistics (Figure 3:1) shows that the majority of people attending consultancy sessions were classified as individual workers (N=12) with management coaching moving to the next highest number (N=8) and finally team consultancy (N=7). This term only Mary Jo and two of the Cara consultants were providing supervision and consultancy services even though this term had higher consultancy numbers than term 1 2018.
- **Term 3:** The consultancy statistics (Figure 3:1) shows that the majority of people attending consultancy sessions in term 3 were classified as individual workers (N=6) with teams the next highest number (N=3) and finally management consultancy (N=2). This term again, only Mary Jo and two of the Cara consultants were providing supervision and consultancy services. The consultancy numbers decreased because Mary Jo had ceased the majority of her clinical contact hours.

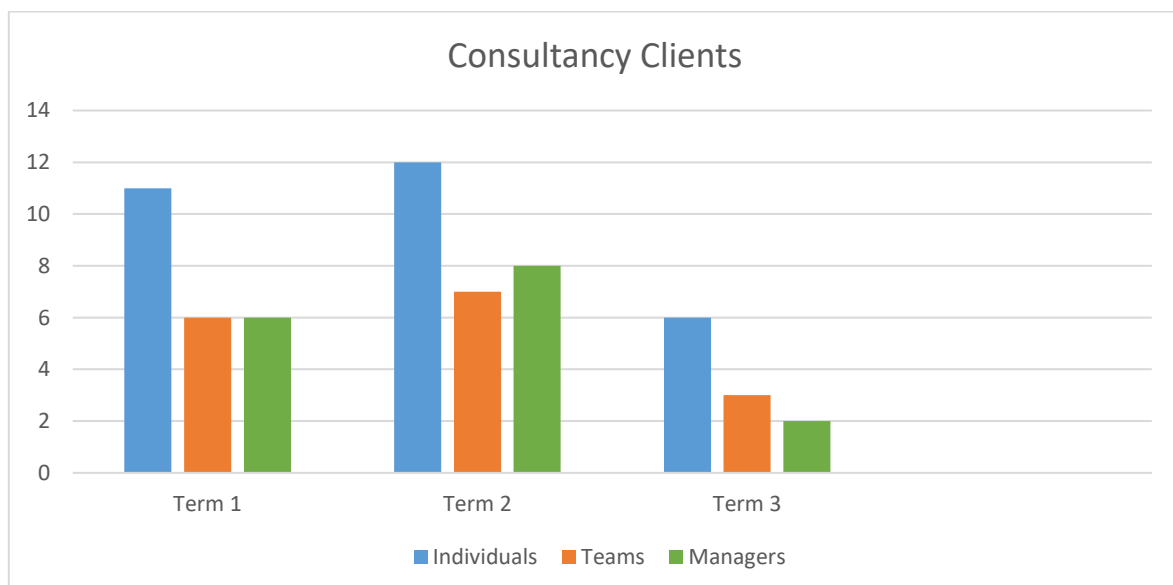


Figure 3:1 Consultancy clients

When further analysing the 2018 consultancy data (Figure 3:2), agency categories could be identified.

- **Term 1:** The majority of the term 1 2018 consultancy clients engaging in sessions, were from the category of Non- Government Organisations (N= 10), followed by other support services' i.e. private workers (N=4), health service (N=2) and finally by Family and Community Services (N= 1).

- **Term 2:** The majority of the engaging consultancy agencies were from the category of Non- Government organisations (N= 14) then private practitioners (N= 4), followed by Health (N=3), Family and Community Services (N= 2) and early intervention services (N=1).
- **Term 3:** During term 3, the majority of the engaging consultancy clients were from both NGO's and private workers (N= 4 per category), followed by health, early intervention services and family services all sitting at (N= 1 per category).

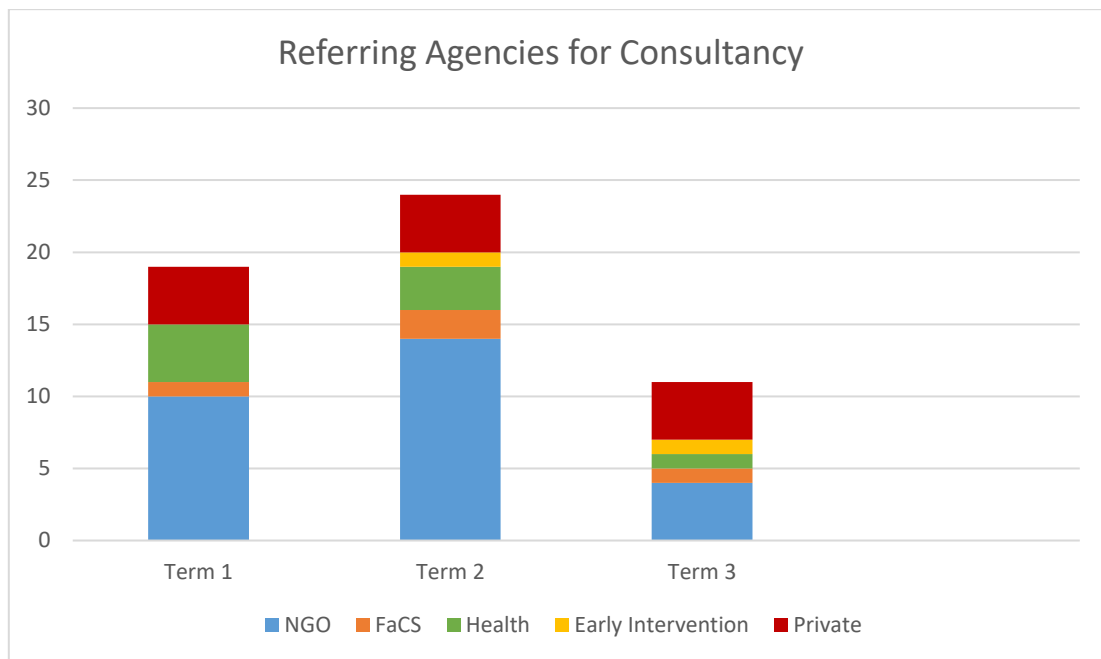


Figure 3:2 Referring Agencies for Consultancy Clients

Across 2018, the majority of consultancy engagements were held by Cara House clinicians for Non- Government Organisations (N= 28), then private services (N= 12), followed by Health (N=6), Family and Community Services (N= 4) and finally Early intervention services (N= 2).

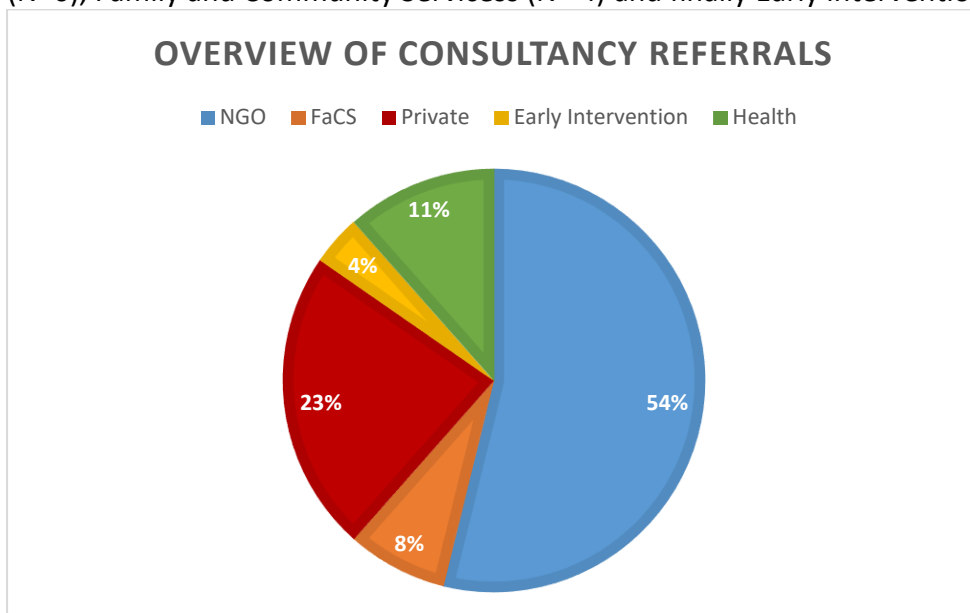


Figure 3:3 Overview of Consultancy Referrals 2018

9. Training Courses

Cara House provides tailor designed training courses for organisations, managers, frontline workers and foster carers. These courses range from one- hour presentations to three-day training packages depending on the learning objectives nominated by agencies.

Cara House provide annual training courses in *Wrapped* and *Without Question*. These courses were created by Mary Jo as an innovative social work resource for working therapeutically with abuse survivors and those that support such vulnerable people.

The three-day *Wrapped in Angels* training course was facilitated twice. Once by Mary Jo and once by a Cara practitioner. One of these training programs was open to the public and the other was provided at request by Richmond Women's Refuge.

Mary Jo facilitated her one-day management training course, *Without Question: The Language of a Mindful Leader* three times across 2018. Two courses were open to the public and one course was specifically for the permanency coordinators at Family and Community Services.

Due to the success of the training initiative with *Uniting* in 2018, Mary Jo was able to repeat training for *Uniting* aimed at upskilling their workers in difficult conversations and empathetic connection to children and carers. This was complete as a set of 6x 2-day training courses that were held both within Sydney and in Regional areas. Drug Health, Family and Community Services, Sydney Housing Services and *Strive* all engaged in additional training projects with Cara House. One of these projects is complete and all others will continue into 2019.

Mary Jo and four Cara House practitioners provided training services to organisations across 2018. Of the sixty (N=62) training courses that Cara House provided, the majority of these were one- day seminars (N= 35), then two- day workshops (N=11) followed by Key note/ conference presentations (N=9), Other (N=4) and lastly three-day courses (N=3), (Figure 4:1). Mary Jo facilitated forty-nine (N=49) of these courses across 2018.

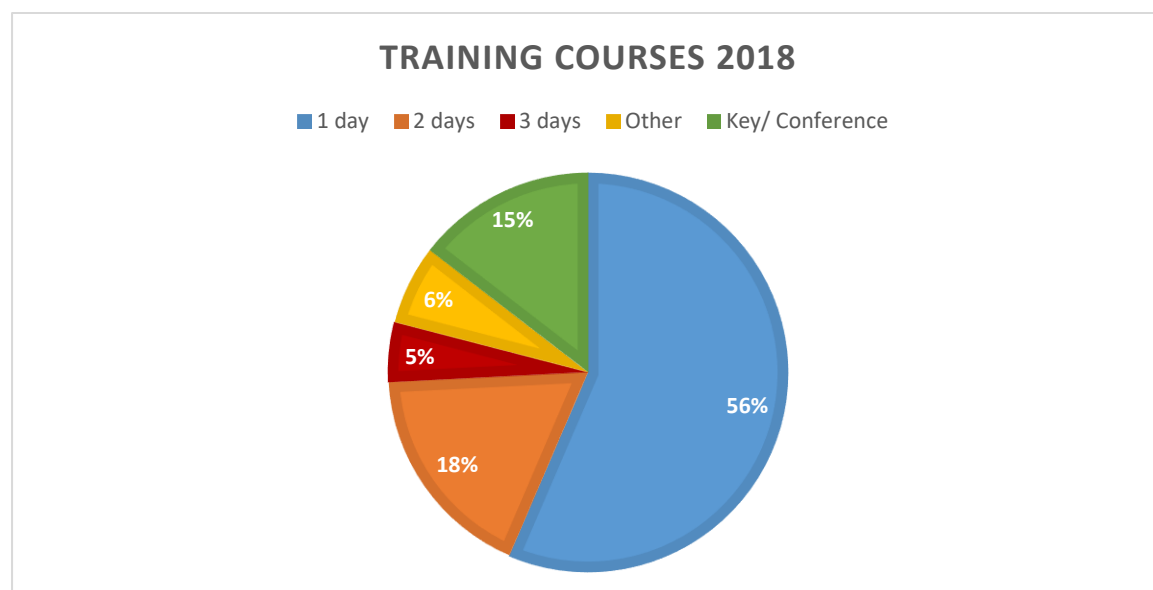


Figure 4:1 Training Courses 2017

The vast majority of training courses were held in the Greater Sydney Region (N= 49), with Regional training courses being interspersed across the year (N= 12) and one conference overseas (N=1). Organisations undertaking the most training services were Non-Government Organisations (N= 21), 'Other' support services e.g. LEAD, CCWT (N=14), followed by inter-agencies/ conferences (N=11), Health (N=7), Family and Community Services (N= 6) and finally Schools (N= 3).

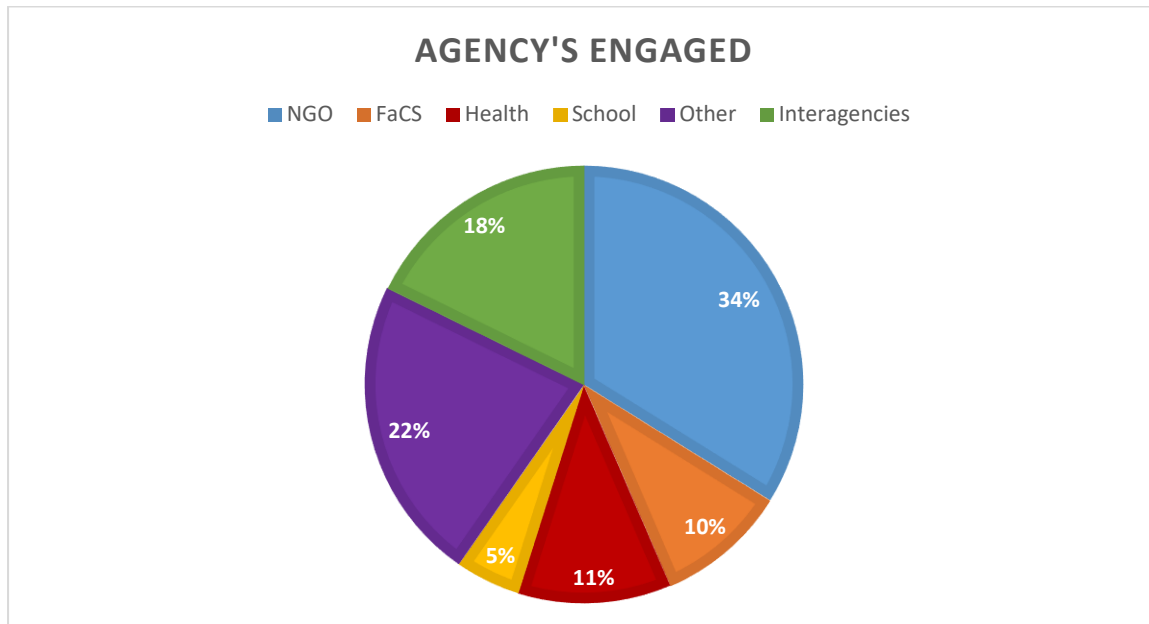


Figure 4:2 Agencies engaged in training 2017

A point of difference in 2018 service provision compared to 2017 was that no grief ceremonies or team bonding days were provided. Instead, agencies referred individual workers for counselling or consultancy support.

10. Conclusion

Cara House was able to provide counselling and consultancy services to 333 clients across terms 1- 3 of 2018. The busiest term for Cara House workers was term 3 2018, whereby 97 open cases were held. Similarly, to previous years, the majority of Cara House clients are indicated to be female children, living in out-of-home-care. Referral reasons are most often for experiences domestic violence, followed by child sexual assault (please note that the vast majority of abuse histories are comorbid with other forms of abuse and trauma). Cara House continues to welcome individuals and families from diverse background and data demonstrates that a 12.85% of clients identify as CALD and 4.42% identify as Aboriginal (being a total of 17.27% of Cara clients). The major referring bodies to Cara House were Non-Government Organisations, Victims Services and Family and Community Services.

Further to these services, Cara House was able to provide 62 training courses to services across the Greater Sydney Region (N= 49), as well as those in regional provinces (N=12). Over 50% of these are one-day courses, requested by Non- Government Agencies.

Overall, Cara House was stable in the intake numbers for provision of counselling and consultancy services, as demonstrated by the data collected from 2016- 2018. Cara House continues to provide a wide range of high- quality services that are available on-site or through outreach provision. We look forward to continuing our work in 2019.

